

Lynn Morrison-Hamilton

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Governor Brian D. Schweitzer
Office of the Governor
Montana State Capitol Bldg.
P.O. Box 200801
Helena MT 59620-0801

Dear Governor Schweitzer,

After thoughtful reflection on the Montana University System accomplishments over the past decade and the challenges that remain for the Regents in the final months of your administration, I'm compelled to share the following comments.

It has been an honor over the past 13 years to work with some of Montana's finest citizen volunteers and education professionals who are passionate about their work and committed to serving Montana's students, campuses and communities. I am equally proud of the many students who use their priceless time to participate in System meetings, sharing their personal stories and the pride, enthusiasm, and vision for the lives they are creating. They are Montana's future. They have earned and deserve our respect and admiration.

Five years ago I believed I could contribute during a second term on the Board by:

1. Working on the college price, cost, quality and student access issues;
2. Helping develop system policy that supports academic pathways from high school through associate, baccalaureate, and graduate programs; and
3. Encouraging System efficiency and effectiveness in administrative and academic programs to improve student success and save the State and students money.

Commissioner Stearns and Superintendent Juno are true Montana leaders in their team effort to improve the learning experiences of Montana students at many levels. Their shared vision, successful collaboration and the hard work of their respective staffs are making a real and measureable difference in student readiness and college access. Their vision includes teaching and learning from kindergarten *through*, not just to college.

In addition to the Board of Regents and Board of Public Education, many policy makers have recognized the importance of education to Montana's future, both K-12 and post-secondary. They've participated in 'shared leadership' conversations and funded initiatives in data management, and distance learning, to name a few, that strengthen education connections and support student success across the state.

The Commissioner and her staff have also been fortunate over the years to secure external resources that enhance Montana's higher education agenda. Two-year education and

workforce training have received unprecedented attention and support from the Board, System, Federal programs, the Montana Legislature, and most recently the Lumina Foundation through *College!Now*.

Ongoing projects in common course numbering, data management, the Virtual Academy, on-line community college, and program level core curricula provide an excellent foundation for further K-12 through college completion and college/workforce readiness conversations.

There is still work to be done in the old Board of Education P-20 areas of alignment, outreach and assessment. Montanans deserve more high quality dual enrollment and advanced placement opportunities. Our faculty and staff members deserve competitive salaries and opportunities for continuing professional development. And most importantly, middle and low-income Montana students and families deserve more targeted financial aid programs that serve first generation, economically disadvantaged and rurally isolated Montanans.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Commissioner and staff members at OCHE and on the campuses for taking time to answer my questions and help me better understand the issues we faced as a lay governing board. Their support and willingness to teach and mentor has been deeply appreciated. I will miss these wonderful people. As I follow the System from a distance they will never be far from my thoughts and I wish them continued success.

I believe it is in the best interest of students and the System to provide my replacement with ample time to get to know today's Board and learn about Montana's students, campuses and education systems and issues before the upcoming election and 2013 legislative session. I'm confident you will be able to make a prompt appointment. You may consider this my letter of resignation from the Board of Regents effective upon receipt.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lynn Morrison-Hamilton", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lynn Morrison-Hamilton, Regent

c: Commissioner Sheila Stearns, Chairman Clayton Christian